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A SYMPOSIUM; THE DESIRABILITY AND FEASIBILITY OF BIBLE-STUDY IN THE COLLEGE.

The effort to secure a larger study of the Bible in our colleges, is one of the healthiest signs of the times. Such an effort should be successful, on any theory of the college course. The study of the Bible is the most interesting of all studies, and the most important. Whatever we may think of its origin, or its contents, no other book has had such wide relations to the history of mankind, and, judging from its actual effects alone, no other book has such power to stimulate thought, and to discipline thought. I believe that the college which studies it most, will be the purest and the strongest.

If this be true, its enlarged study is certainly feasible. Anything can be done which is truly desirable, and if other courses have to give way to this, any loss thereby occasioned will be more than compensated.

(Pres.) JULIUS H. SEELYE,

Amherst College, Amherst, Mass.

June 22, 1887.

A better acquaintance of our educated young men with the Bible, it seems to me, is greatly to be desired; and some kind of biblical instruction to our college undergraduates I am disposed to think is both advisable and feasible. But the instruction should not be intrusted to incompetent hands. One lecture a week, for a half year or less, might, I think, be profitably given to the senior classes in our colleges. I would make it a required study rather than an elective, because those most needing to take it would be least likely to elect it. THE OLD TESTAMENT STUDENT would, I think, be a most useful aid in the proposed college study of the Bible. I am,

Yours, very truly,

(Pres.) E. G. ROBINSON,

Brown University, Providence, R. I.

July 13, 1887.

There is nothing I so much desire to see introduced more extensively into our regular college curriculum as a study of the great English classics, and that not merely for the language and style, but for the valuable aid afforded to many collateral studies. If this be true of the secular writings, surely it must apply with more force to the systematic and critical study of the English Bible. It would seem that it should be feasible and that it is certainly desirable to render such study accessible as an elective in the curriculum of every college.

Yours faithfully,

(Pres.) G. D. B. PEPPER,

Colby University.

July 13, 1887.

I regard the study of the English Bible and related topics in college as exceedingly desirable and entirely feasible. It is a book too centrally and vitally related to history, literature and civilization to be omitted from a course of liberal education. For ten years I have conducted such an exercise with the senior class

in this institution on each Monday morning, and similar arrangements are now made for the other classes respectively. It takes the place of the Greek Testament recitation on Monday morning, which had existed in the college from its early history.

Yours very truly,

(Pres.) S. C. BARTLETT,

July 9, 1887.

Dartmouth College, Dartmouth, N. H.

Next year, by a special vote of the trustees, at their late annual meeting, I am to conduct a class in the English Bible, in which the study is to be compulsory, and is to include all the students of the university. In mapping out a course of study for "The Shepardson College for Women" that has just been organized here, I put the study of the Bible,—making it compulsory,—into every term of the collegiate course, and the trustees of that college adopted it with expressions of the most hearty approval. For one, I am emphatically in favor of this. Is it not more important to trace God's providence in connection with the people to whom he gave his written law, and with whom he made his covenant, than to trace the history of the Greeks and Romans? Why should we do the latter and utterly neglect the former? It is important that we study such characters as Socrates, Plato, Demosthenes and Cicero, but vastly more important for us to understand Moses, Isaiah, John and Paul, and above all, to study the character, words and works of Jesus Christ, who is the author of all that is grandest, purest and best in the most advanced and perfect civilization of the world.

Yours most truly,

(Pres.) GALUSHA ANDERSON,

Denison University, Granville, O.

In my judgment, the study of the English Bible is an essential part of any well ordered college curriculum. So Lafayette College has regarded it always. That the study is universally popular I cannot affirm. This, however, is the case with no subject. But surely in this day when, as never before, the public mind is concerned with the history and contents of the Bible, no one can be considered educated who has not a somewhat full knowledge of the subjects directly and indirectly suggested by the sacred volume. The experience of Lafayette College proves the introduction of the Bible into the regular college curriculum both advisable and feasible. The intellectual results are good, and only good, and the moral are such as cannot be stated in words.

Yours very truly,

(Pres.) JAS. H. MASON KNOX,

July 8, 1887.

Lafayette College, Easton, Pa.

A weekly lesson in the English Bible for every class, has been a part of the required course in Oberlin College through all its history. There has sometimes been difficulty in securing from the classes thorough preparation for the exercise, and the work has often taken the form of a lecture, sometimes of a conversation between teacher and pupil. But the lesson has not seemed burdensome or wearisome; and within the last few years there has been a growing interest in the study. Indeed to such an extent has the interest prevailed, that at the begin-

ning of the last term a petition, quite numerously signed, was presented to the faculty asking that the study might be made an elective, as a daily exercise, for a single term. Several volunteer classes, mostly meeting on Sunday, under the general direction of one of the professors, have been carried on during the past year, for the study of the English Bible. These have been attended by a large number of our students. The time seems to be propitious for more effective work in this direction.

Yours faithfully,

(Pres.) JAS. H. FAIRCHILD,
Oberlin College, Oberlin, O.

July 12, 1887.

I may state that in this college every student is under Bible instruction once a week. Nearly the whole of this is connectedly the English Bible, viz., the Old and New Testaments. In the academic department, however, we use the Greek Testament with the sophomores, taking them through the Gospel according to St. John.

The end we have in view is solely religious instruction for the benefit of the student. The plan is well adapted for this purpose. We cannot take our students through every chapter of the Bible, but we take up various parts of the Bible.

(Pres.) JAMES MCCOSH,
Princeton College, Princeton, N. J.

July 11, 1887.

I am well convinced that the English Bible should have a place in our college courses of study.

Just how to introduce it is a question not easily answered. In our Syracuse University I have introduced it, with the approval of our faculty, as an elective under the phrase "Bible Doctrine and Ethics." The Bible is the text-book, and I teach it by topics with appropriate Bible references. This brief statement of what we do will probably as well represent my views as anything else I could write.

Yours respectfully,

(Pres.) C. N. SRMS,
Syracuse University, Syracuse, N. Y.

July 11, 1887.

I confess to nothing short of enthusiasm in favor of the study of the English Bible in the curriculum of every college, and of its having a place among the electives also.

What may have a right to be studied in college if it be not that book of which Luther said: "I fear the universities will prove great gateways to hell unless the professors therein labor faithfully in the Word of God;" of which Bungener says that Calvin made it the "centre" in the Genevan education, of which the early Harvard records are full, and which even Huxley would not see taken away from the youth of England because there could be found nothing like it for making character.

There is time for it, whatever may be said of the rapidity with which the demands of education seem to consume the available hours. Our experience here, where all the classes study it or its "defence and confirmation," and where

the professorship of "Biblical Instruction and Apologetics" was among the earliest endowed, has been so satisfactory that we are anxiously seeking to extend the study.

The regular and official study will but help the private and co-operative study, and the abundant and inviting opportunities for laymen with open Bibles which they understand and, in the deepest sense, know *by heart*, will intensify and perpetuate the interest.

Success to your efforts to have the Bible given again the place in higher education from which its displacement is a shame to our common Protestantism, and has proved a harm to our national life.

Sincerely yours,

(Pres.) SYLVESTER F. SCOVEL,

July 8, 1887.

The University of Wooster, Wooster, O.

I have long felt that the English Bible should be made a part of the English curriculum, and in those colleges where there are few electives, it should be made a part of the regular course. It seems to me an absurd anomaly that a man should come out of college, supposed to have a liberal education, and know about Greek and Latin history, whose relation to American life and institutions is measurably remote, and nothing about Hebrew history, whose relation to American life and thought is very direct.

Yours sincerely,

LYMAN ABBOTT,

July 11, 1887.

The Christian Union, New York.

I do certainly think that the study of the Bible should have a place, and an honored place, in a college course—not because of its claim to be a divine revelation, but because it contains the earliest history of the human race; and because simply for its literature, apart from its moral teachings, it is immeasurably superior to any other book which antiquity has left to us. A year or two since we had the pleasure of a visit from the late President Hopkins. One morning at prayers I read the fourth chapter of the first epistle of John, when he turned to me quickly and said, "There is more in that chapter than in all the philosophy of the ancient world." So I venture to think that there is more in the Hebrew prophets than in the Greek poets. And yet in most colleges, weeks or months of study will be given to a Greek play, or to the odes of Horace, while both the Old and New Testaments are wholly ignored. This seems to me not giving importance to things in their due proportion. Besides, to understand the history of modern civilization, a large space should be given to a book which has exerted a greater influence than any other on the faith and fortunes of mankind.

Yours very truly,

HENRY M. FIELD,

July 18, 1887.

The Evangelist, New York.

I do not believe in the English Bible as a *required* college study at all; and even the Greek Testament, as a required study, is of doubtful value. It is worthless if not a regular *daily* study for a while. Of course the optional study of the Bible is good, in whatever language, but I think I should put it on Sunday, in an

ordinary Bible class, such as we are familiar with. The fact that the Bible is also a religious book, as well as a book of literature, makes it indecorous to make it the object of unwilling study.

Yours truly,

WILLIAM HAYES WARD,

The Independent, New York.

July 8, 1887.

The editor of *THE OLD TESTAMENT STUDENT* asks my opinion of the "advisability and feasibility of making the study of the English Bible a part of the regular college curriculum, at least as an elective." It will be admitted that the college ought to do the best it can for the intellectual development, discipline, and furnishing of the student. I leave moral, and much more religious considerations out of view, and base the conclusion solely upon the effect of the study of the Scriptures upon the intellect. I will take the liberty of referring to a highly distinguished living journalist, Mr. Murat Halstead, of the *Cincinnati Commercial Gazette*, for an example. Mr. Halstead never has been a believer in the Bible as a product of divine inspiration. If he has ever read it for spiritual guidance, it is since the time when we were fellow students. And yet any one who will study Mr. Halstead's literary style will see that he has been a close and appreciative Bible student. His marvelously clear, strong, and elegant English is constantly enriched, reinforced, and dignified with biblical allusions. Mr. Halstead never would, in my opinion, have reached the position he now holds in literature had he not received, from Dr. Robert H. Bishop, thorough drill in the Bible as a classic. As a classic, the Bible is wholly unapproachable by any other. Let a writer draw an illustration or an authority from Homer, and nine-tenths of his readers will receive an unpleasant reminder of their ignorance of the Greek. But let him draw upon the Scriptures, and all those readers will catch the flash of the light and delight in it. There has been no eminent English writers in the past whose writings fail to show familiarity with this wonderful classic. I hold it to be impossible for a writer or speaker to attain his best, or even any considerable eminence, without it. He must have its English, he must catch its tone, he must be familiar with its principles, or he never can sway the minds and hearts of the populace. I am tempted to show why Demosthenes could wield the Greeks with eloquence which would fall flat on an English audience, and to give illustrations of the employment of Scripture in the conflicts of the courts, of politics and of statesmanship, but am not entitled to trespass upon your space. If I have spoken truly thus far, then the conclusion is inevitable: That college which does not make use of the most valuable classic available, does not do the best it can do by its students. It sends them out into competition or conflict with men who are better trained, better armed, better furnished, than themselves.

WM. C. GRAY,

The Interior, Chicago, Ill.

July 12, 1887.

There are two elements in the question: the one having respect to the practicability of finding a place for the English Bible in the established courses of study; the other having respect to difficulties which may be raised by persons in the management of such institutions, not in sympathy with Bible-study, at least in that connection. The making of English Bible-study an *eclectic*, would seem

to relieve whatever real difficulty may exist in reference to the first question. Placing such a study in the curriculum implies nothing as to the frequency with which the class in it should meet. The main matter is that it should meet regularly, meet as often as the claims of other studies will allow, and as an understood part of the college-work. It seems to me that with a really good will toward the measure on the part of those concerned, such a new element in college-work should be entirely practicable.

As to the second point of difficulty, objection on the part of those charged with the management would in many cases be easily overcome. There must be a good many Christian colleges in the country already in the main prepared for such a change. In proportion as the new study were found to be practicable and profitable, others would follow the example. There will always be opposition to what is new; yet when what is new is also right, perseverance will prevail in the end.

I do not need to assure you how heartily I should approve of the introduction of such study. Why should not the Bible, as the world's greatest book, be included in the list of those which it is desirable every educated person should know? And why, in the study of all other ancient history and ancient literature, should this be left out?

Yours, most truly,

JUSTIN A. SMITH,

The Standard, Chicago.

It is a great pity that the study of the English Bible finds no place in the curriculum of so many of our American colleges; as an obligatory, an elective, or an optional study. It is really a lamentable fact that during the entire course of his undergraduate life, the average American student is practically cut off from Bible study.

That this loss more than cancels all the good obtained by many a college student in his study of that which is provided for him in the curriculum, I have not a doubt. I have long felt that no greater lack exists in our American colleges as a whole, than this lack of instruction in the Bible as the Bible.

If, indeed, a college needs an addition to its faculty, in order to secure Bible instruction to its undergraduates, the funds for an endowment of a Bible-teacher's chair will not long be wanting, with the missionary spirit as prevalent as it is in the church of Christ.

God speed the effort to introduce Bible-study into our American colleges!

Yours sincerely,

H. CLAY TRUMBULL,

July 13, 1887.

The Sunday School Times, Philadelphia, Pa.